

In Rare Secret Session

Senate Bars Delay In Start of ABM

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The Senate turned down a last-ditch attempt yesterday to hold off construction of a "thin" anti-ballistic missile system after clearing the galleries for a rare secret session.

Sen. John Sherman Cooper (R-Ky.), who pleaded for a slowdown, claimed that the decision would lead to a fruitless expenditure of \$40 billion to \$70 billion in the years ahead. He said it would only escalate the nuclear arms race and promote a false sense of security.

He was beaten by a vote of 45 to 25.

"Preparedness," declared Sen. John Stennis (D-Miss.), "cannot wait until there is a nuclear treaty. We have no choice. We must go forward."

The controversy commanded top priority as the Senate took up a massive \$71.9 billion De-

fense Department bill, the biggest single appropriation in the Nation's history.

Sen. Richard B. Russell (D-Ga.), chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee that sent it to the floor, warned that even heavier spending was in store because of the relentless demands of the war in Vietnam.

He said the raiding of military stockpiles for the war in Vietnam was beginning to pose a threat to the national security.

The ABM controversy centered on a \$700.3-million appropriation for the Sentinel anti-missile shield.

Cooper and nine other Senators from both sides of the aisle moved to strike the \$387.4 million earmarked to start missile production and deployment. (The rest of the money is for research and development.)

"Thick or thin," he insisted, See DEFENSE, A23, Col. 4

it "will not alter the capacity of the Soviet Union to destroy the United States."

The Senate moved into its first secret session since July 14, 1966 to take up intelligence reports and classified information, presumably concerning Communist China's missile program and Russia's fledgling ABM efforts.

On the surface, the Sentinel ABM system has been billed by the Administration as a "thin" \$5-billion program to guard against the nuclear threat posed by China. But many of its Senate proponents view it as the start of a long-delayed defense against a Soviet missile attack.

Sen. Philip A. Hart (D-Mich.) charged that it was like playing poker with a worthless hand. "After all," he said, "even a perfected system—and the Sentinel is far from perfect—could be overcome by simply throwing more offensive missiles against it."

Advocates of delay maintained that the United States should concentrate instead on reaching agreement with the Soviet Union to limit both offensive and defensive nuclear weapons.

Communist China, Cooper added, citing statements by former Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara and others, is expected to have even 10 intercontinental ballistic missiles of its own by the mid-1970s.

Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.) called such predictions "chancy" and reminded the Senate that "our intelligence community clearly underestimated how soon Red China would get its first H-bomb."

Jackson and other advocates of the ABM system contended that Russia would be prompted to negotiate on limiting nuclear weapon only by U. S. strength.

Requested by Cooper, the secret session lasted some 2½ hours before the Senator opened the galleries again for a final round of talk and the vote. When it was over, Cooper lost a wider margin than the 31 to 28 defeat of a similar amendment he offered last April 1.

Sen. Joseph Clark (D-Pa.) said the Defense budget was full of "shocking waste and fat," but several amendments he offered to trim spending were overwhelmingly rejected.

"The military-industrial complex," Clark charged, "has taken over the Pentagon. It's taken over the Joint Chiefs. And it's taken over the Congress."

At the outset of overall debate on the bill, which began Tuesday, Sen. Russell, who is also chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, voiced his frustration over the conduct of the war in Vietnam.

"We cannot continue to support a war, be capable of honoring our commitments abroad, and maintain an adequate defense posture without substantially increasing the size of our Defense budget in the near future," he said. "We have drawn too long from the pantry shelf of military hardware for us not to realize that the day of reckoning must come and it will come very soon."